

Background

The most common deer in the San Antonio area are undoubtedly the white-tail deer or *Odocoileus virginianus*. This distinctive looking mammal is a native of Texas and statewide population estimates range up to 4 million. Males of the species are known as “bucks” which can weigh upwards of several hundred pounds while female “does” are lighter. Average height is up to 2 to 3.5 feet at the shoulder. Deer are herbivores and ruminants—that is, they eat mostly leaves, acorns and other plant parts which are digested through their highly specialized digestive system that includes four stomachs! For many residents, deer are a valued part of their neighborhood and serve as a beautiful attraction for the area. For others, deer are disruptive, as they can cause damage to gardens and property and potential car accidents. It should be noted wildlife like white-tails are protected by a number of State laws and City ordinances including laws that address poaching and cruelty. State wildlife laws and information can be found at www.tpwd.texas.gov while SA’s animal laws can be seen on the ACS website at www.saacs.net.



Mating Season

Deer mating season or “rutting” starts in early fall and continues through November. You can tell mating season is approaching when bucks start sparring with other males, stamping the ground and rubbing their antlers on trees to mark their territory. All these displays are meant to attract the attention of fertile does. Deer may also be more territorial during this short season, leading to an increase in fatal road crossings. Post-rut, it’s not uncommon to see bucks lying prone for several days followed by a period of increased food intake. Gestation for whitetails is seven and a half months long and we will see fawns being born around San Antonio in late May and June.

Who to call for...

Deer who have been abused/cruelty treated...

Notify Animal Care Services through 3-1-1

Injured deer or for questions about fawns...

Contact Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation at (830) 336-2725

Reporting a person bitten by a deer...

Notify Animal Care Services through 3-1-1

Poachers or those illegally “tagging” deer

Call Operation Game Thief at 1-800-792-GAME

A deer acting strangely...

Notify the Game Wardens assigned to Bexar County at 210-348-7375

Dead deer pickup (City street or right of way)

Notify the City Solid Waste Department through 3-1-1

Dead deer pickup (Highway)

Contact Texas Department of Transportation directly at 512-974-0883



DEER IN THE CITY

Co-existing with Texas’
best known wildlife



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**ANIMAL CARE SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

Living with Deer

Feeding & Population Control

Although legal, feeding deer is *strongly* discouraged as they can generally thrive on food they find on their own. Not only does foraging for food help build survival skills, but it also provides deer a more varied and nutritious diet than they would get from human-provided food like deer corn. In fact, deer corn is considered the least nutritionally sound supplemental option because of its high carbs and lack of crude protein which deer need to survive. Deer corn is akin to junk food. Still, like toddlers with candy, deer have a natural preference for it and this introduction of an unnatural food supply could contribute to an increase in population, creating a neighborhood nuisance. **State wildlife officials highly discourage supplemental deer feeding.**

What does San Antonio and the State of Texas think about urban deer management?



There are a number of urban deer populations throughout San Antonio and feeding or interaction is **STRONGLY** discouraged for its negative effect on the animals (and potential risk to residents). This includes things like altered natural behaviors, deer desensitization to humans leading to increased deer-car accidents, disease risks, property damage as well as environmental risks associated with the accumulation of fecal matter from the wildlife. City staff will work with Texas Parks and Wildlife to meet with concerned residents and provide educational resources on urban deer issues and State urban biologists can even offer communities technical guidance with the unique challenges deer in the city may pose. However, truly minimizing the impact of urban deer relies heavily on responsible behavior and cooperation among neighbors. *Reducing feeding is the primary step* but reporting poaching (hunting in the city limits) and other illegal activity like animal cruelty is vital as well to ensuring better neighborhoods for residents and native wildlife alike.

Deer Regulation in S.A.

It is **ILLEGAL** to:

- Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly beat, cruelly treat, or otherwise abuse wild deer.
- Trap deer without a State permit.
- Move or transport deer without a State permit
- Sell deer (or any animal) on any roadside, public right-of-way, commercial parking lot, garage sale, flea market, festival, park, community center, etc.
- Hunt (capture, track, take, or kill) wild deer in a public road or right-of-way or on private property without the owner's permission.
- *Discharge a firearm or use a bow and arrow within San Antonio city limits (to hunt or otherwise).*



- Tag deer or remove antlers from a deceased deer found roadside or on any public property.
- Have a deer as a pet.
- Raise or keep a deer unless you possess a State wildlife rehabber's license.

How to Deter Deer Humanely

- Don't feed deer.
- Use commercial deer repellents
- Try Internet DIY deer-proofers like a spray solution of cayenne pepper, water and egg white
- Use motion-sensor sprinklers
- Slow down and drive with extra alertness in known deer crossing areas
- Cover or fence off vulnerable young plants
- Landscape with plants deer dislike
- Keep leaves, acorns, fallen fruit and other edible yard debris cleared from your property

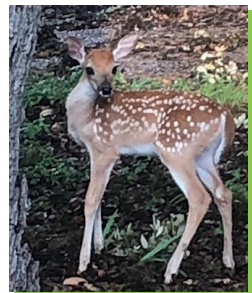


What About fawns?

A doe will leave fawns in what they consider to be a safe place for up to 14 hours at a time. Fawns will remain quiet and still, camouflaged by their spotted coats as their mothers roam looking for food. Each spring, wildlife rehabilitators and rescues are overwhelmed with fawns from well-meaning people who take baby deer out of the wild unnecessarily.

If you find a fawn you think is abandoned, check for all of the following:

- Is the fawn lying with their front legs tucked under their chest?
- Is the fawn quiet?
- Is the fawn laying still?



If yes to all of these, the mother is likely still taking care of the fawn and will return.

- Is the fawn pacing?
- Is the fawn crying out?
- Is the fawn laying on its side?
- Is the fawn injured or covered in fire ants?

If yes, to any of these, the fawn most likely truly needs help and needs to be brought to a licensed rehabber. Call Wildlife Rescue at (830) 336-2725 for more information on what to do next. It is illegal to keep or raise a deer in the State of Texas unless licensed to do so as a wildlife rehabilitator.